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ABSTRACT

As product and process, the Native American press has a long history. The establishment of the first native-run press in 1828 began a press history that continues today. That history is represented by more than 2,000 periodical titles alone, two-thirds of which have been established during the past 20 years. Impressive collections of these materials in hard copy or in microform are housed at a number of institutions, including the Wisconsin State Historical Society, the American Indian Studies Center at the University of California at Los Angeles, Princeton University, Navajo Community College, and the American Native Press Archives at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Union lists have been compiled, and exhaustive reference guides have been written. It is time to recognize the native press for what it represents in American Indian studies: resource materials generated for the most part by native peoples themselves. Since the native press in general represents the voice of the Indian community, the continued credibility of those involved in American Indian studies will be measured to some degree, at least in the Indian community, by the extent to which they take that voice into account. (JHZ)

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The American Native Press and American Indian Studies

Daniel F. Littlefield, Jr.

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The advent of a new decade in higher education usually spurs policymakers to evaluate programs and policies and to make plans and projections for the coming decade. So it was with American Indian studies at the advent of the eighties. Evaluation actually began in the late seventies, and in 1980 the fourth annual Conference on Contemporary American Indian Issues was devoted to the matter. Despite the general consensus that the "flush" times of the seventies were over and that American Indian studies had entered a critical era regarding its place in higher education, the tone of the reporting was generally optimistic. Indian educators could look at the preceding decade with some satisfaction concerning the development of American Indian studies. There had been tremendous growth in the number of programs and a number of institutions had developed programs of quality. Indian studies courses were offered in colleges without programs and in some secondary schools, and there was phenomenal growth in Indian enrollments.

Coincident with these developments a viable native press emerged in America. From 1971 through 1979 over six hundred titles were established by the periodical press, a number of small presses were established, and a press association and a wire service were begun. By far the major efforts of the native press have been community and professionally, not academically, oriented. Nevertheless, the rise of the native press was a potentially significant event for American Indian studies. Thus far, only the native academic press and small press have played significant roles. However, the future success of American Indian studies will depend, in part, on how well educators tap the native press in general as the vital resource it represents.

The future of American Indian studies may depend on how well educators tap the native press.

Since Indian education was institutionalized in America, there has been a close relation between the press and the activities of educators. In earlier years, the relation was much clearer than it has been during the last two decades. When Asher Wright began *Ne Jaguĥnigòaǧesgwathah* (1841–1850) among the Seneca and Gideon H. Pond began *Dakota Tawaxitku Kin* (1850–1852), the relation was clear, as it was later when *The Red Man and Helper* (1880-1904) was established at Carlisle and *The Indian Leader* (1897...) was at Haskell Institute. The press was used simply to propagandize the public concerning denominational activities or federal educational policies affecting the Indian. The same has been true for much of this century. In the 1930's, for instance, publications as small as *The Nambe Dragon* (1933–1934) and as large as *Indian Education* (1936–1966)

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reflected the educational goals set down for Indians by federal policy makers. Throughout the 1960's, most federally-funded Indian education programs of the Great Society had presses whose products touted one common theme: "See what we're doing for the American Indian!" In all of these cases, the programs and their directors were responsible to policy makers and the budgets they oversaw, and the press served a public relations function. In the 1970's, however, when Indian educators and students assumed a larger role in determining the direction of Indian education and Indian studies programs emerged as academic units in higher education, the need for a native academic press became apparent.

The result has been a number of fine journals and other publications. Leading journals in American Indian studies are *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* (1974 . . .), *American Indian Quarterly* (1974 . . .), and *The Wicazo Sa Review* (1985 . . .). Significant non-periodical imprints in Indian studies have also been issued by the UCLA American Indian Studies Center, Navajo Community College Press, Institute of American Indian Arts Press, Indian University Press, and others. To support the work of the academic press and to publicize Indian studies, most American Indian studies programs have maintained the public relations function of the press by issuing one or more newsletters or newspapers, some well-executed technically and excellent in quality, such as *Oshkaabewis* (1974–1980) at Bemidji State University, *Nisnawbe News* (1971–1982) at Northern Michigan University, and *Northeast Indian Quarterly* (1984 . . .) at Dartmouth College.

The native academic press is at the heart of American Indian studies programs.

As publication outlets for Indian scholars and writers, the native academic press is at the heart of two efforts necessary for the survival of Indian studies programs: establishment of American Indian studies as a respected discipline in the academic community and retention of American Indian faculty. Early on, while the thrust of many programs was Indian consciousness raising, student advocacy, outreach, and public service, UCLA embarked as well on a research-oriented program. Since the late 1970's, however, there has been a growing recognition on the part of Indian educators elsewhere that survival of American Indian studies in the academic world requires its faculty to engage in the kinds of scholarly activities typical of other disciplines, that is, research and publication.[1]

Some scholars tend to denigrate acquired knowledge and folk wisdom that is passed throught the generations orally.

This position has its critics. Some argue, for instance, that the controllers of American education have defined the product of scholarly inquiry as "scientific research" and tend to denigrate other types of acquired knowledge, such as folk wisdom passed orally through time.[2] Others point out a generally negative attitude among Indian leaders toward Indian academic professionals, while still others argue that learning the methods and methodologies and mastering the field do not necessarily mean the acceptance of values the field espouses.[3] Most, one way or another, have faced up to the fact that guidelines for tenure and promotion are geared to the "norm" of college and university faculty—that is, white and male—and that they require academic research and publication. To the Indian educator they say, "Publish or vanish." To obey might label one as "just another good ol' boy with a Ph. D.," but to ignore the reality would bring about a colder one: university faculty without any Indian members.In their 1985 needs

assessment of American Indian Studies, Susan Guyette and Charlotte Heth of UCLA point out the need for publication in American Indian studies and urge American Indian studies faculty to submit "top quality articles" to increase the quality and prestige of American Indian Studies journals.[4]

Indeed, the future success of American Indian Studies depends, in part, on the continued viability of the native academic press. Unfortunately, in recent years and for whatever reason, *American Indian Quarterly* and *American Indian Culture and Research Journal* have had production problems and have appeared erratically. These and other existing journals must be bolstered and new ones established. Guyette and Heth point out the need for institutional support for such journals but note that departments discourage faculty from publishing in journals other than "the recognized academic journals of the disciplines."[5] Unfortunately, when it comes to funding, the academic and social climate does not look good for the near future of the native academic press. Faculty and administrators in higher education remain ignorant of the diversity of Indian cultures and refuse to recognize or meet the special needs of Indian students. Though James Watt is gone, his mentality regarding Indians prevails at times in the administration of federal policy. Affirmative action policy has been attacked and rendered ineffective in many institutions. Conservative groups have attacked the "liberal" treatment of minorities in textbooks, and the "back to basics" movement obviously excludes Indian studies. Therefore, it seems unlikely that money will be forthcoming for journals devoted to that subject. All of these trends bode ill for the native academic press, if not for American Indian studies. The fact that today's Yuppies are likely candidates for appointment to boards of regents and trustees in the 1990's makes the prospects look even more dismal. One comforting thought is that the educational pendulum will swing as it always has. Indian studies faculty should plan ahead so that, as the pendulum begins its return swing, they might exact from institutional administrators long-term commitments to publication.

The native small press has been a valuable contributor to the development of American Indian studies.

Along with the native academic press, the native small press has been significant in the development of American Indian studies in the humanities, especially literary studies. Non-Indian readers in 1970, asked to name some Indian writers, might have been able to list N. Scott Momaday and Vine Deloria, Jr. The subsequent growth in the general popularity of the canon of native literature and the scholarly attention it has received is due in large measure to native small press publication of literary magazines and other imprints. For instance, Joseph Bruchac III's Greenfield Review Press has published not only the *Review* (1970...) but also collections by writers such as Janet Campbell Hale, Linda Hogan, Wendy Rose, Bruchac, and others. Maurice Kenny has published *Contact II* (1976...), while his Strawberry Press has produced works by writers such as Paula Gunn Allen, Peter Blue Cloud, Robert J. Conley, Joy Harjo, Lance Henson, Duane Niatum, Rose, and others. William Oandasan has published *A: A Journal of Contemporary Literature* (1967–1980), and his A Publications has published works by Alex Jacobs, Niatum, and Oandasan. Akwesasne, New York, has been an important center of publishing activities since the late 1960's. Its most recent contribution to the literary field is the fine literary/arts magazine *Akwekon* (1985...). Finally, in recent years, literary activity has increased

among Alaska Native writers, with encouragement from groups like the Sitka Writers Convocation and the Alaska Native Publishing Conference, journals like the *Journal of Alaska Native Arts*, and small presses such as Orca Press. The recent establishment of the native-owned Raven's Bones Press at Sitka can do little but encourage the further development of Alaska Native literary studies. In recent years, the Association of Departments of English, the Conference on College Composition and Communication, and the Modern Language Association have given their sanction to the study of American native literature.[6] Recognition by the academy of American native literature as a "legitimate" canon for study is due in large measure to the availability of primary works through the native small press and scholarly attention given it in the academic press.

The recognition of native literature is due in large measure to the native small press.

Unlike the academic and small press, the nonacademic native press unfortunately has been of less significance in American Indian studies. Tied closely to the academic processes, the former generally reflect the interests and goals of American Indian studies programs. On the other hand, the nonacademic native press is community and professionally oriented. In fact, the differences between the native academic press and the native press, in general, reflect the gaps between American Indian studies emphases and the needs expressed by Indian communities as addressed by Guyette and Heth. Existing American Indian studies programs, based primarily in the humanities and social sciences, they found, focus "on long-term goals such as cultural preservation," while reservation, rural, and urban communities express "short-term needs" regarding such matters as "poverty, unemployment, health problems, and low education levels."[7] From the early 1970's on, the native press has constantly addressed these issues as well as others such as business and economic development, natural resources, and law, whether the press represents the reservation, tribe, Indian nation, Alaska Native corporation, urban community, or intertribal, or other native organization. It should be stressed, however, that the academic community has not totally ignored these issues. In the area of law, for instance, *American Indian Law Newsletter* was established at the University of New Mexico in 1968, and *American Indian Law Review* has been published at the University of Oklahoma since 1973; in mental health, *White Cloud Journal of American Indian Mental Health* began at the Univerity of Oregon in 1978 and is now published at the university of South Dakota.

If American Indian studies programs respond, as the Guyette and Heth needs assessment suggests, with specialized programs to meet the communities' needs, the nonacademic native press should assume a larger significance than heretofore in Indian studies. Reservation or tribal newspapers and newsletters represent a monthly, weekly, or—in the case of the Navajos—daily chronicle of local affairs, while specialized publications have been devoted to specific matters of concern to Indian communities. The press should serve as a valuable resource for curriculum development because it records the research, thought, and opinions of native writers, scholars, professionals, and leaders on contemporary and historical issues.

A particularly valuable resource is the specialized publication. For years, the press had produced publications devoted solely to each of the short-term community needs reported by Guyette and Heth as well as to

other of equal concern. In the area of law, for instance, significant publications besides those based in academic institutions have been issued by independent organizations such as the institute for the Development of Indian Law, which published *Legislative Review* (1971–1975), *Education Journal* (1972–1975), and *American Indian Journal* (1975–1981); the American Indian Lawyer Training Program, which publishes *Indian Law Reporter* (1974 . . .); and Native American Rights Fund, which publishes *NARF Legal Review* (1972 . . .). The latter has also published significant nonperiodical titles related to Indian law, including *The NILL Catalogue*, *Bibliography on Indian Economic Development*, *Indian Claims Commission Decisions*, and manuals on natural resources, tribal regulatory systems, economic development, Indian education, and child welfare. Other groups serving more local or regional audiences have issued newsletters such as *California Indian Legal Services Newsletter* (1969–1980), California Urban Indian Health Council's *Legal Notes* (1981–1984), and *DAC International Newsletter* (1984). Finally, tribes, pueblos, and nations have published newsletters to serve their own people, such as Papago Legal Services' *Winds of Law* (1971–1975), *Zuni Legal Aid Newsletter* (1971–1972), and *DNA Newsletter* (1968 . . .) published by DNA Legal Services of the Navajo Nation.

A similar publishing history exists in the area of health. Numerous independent organizations have issued periodical publications, such as American Indian Health Care Association's *News Briefs* (1980 . . .) and *NIHB Health Reporter* (1977 . . .) of the National Indian Health Board. Professional organizations have issued publications such as *Newsletter of the American Indian/Alaska Native Nurses Association* (1972–1983) and *Association of American Indian Physicians Newsletter* (1973 . . .). Local or regional needs for information have been met by publications such as the California Urban Indian Health Council's *CUIHC Newsletter* (1974 . . .), *CHW Newsletter* (1982 . . .), *Clinician's Letter* (1981 . . .), *Indian Alcohol Times* (1981–1983), and others. Tribes, nations, and native corporations have also published health-related periodicals such as the Hopi Health Manpower Development Program's *HHMDP Newsletter* (1981), the Omaha Tribe's *Carl T. Curtis Health Education Newsletter* (1978 . . .), the Navajo Health Authority's *N.H.A. Ba' Hani'* (1975) and other publications, and the Tanana Chiefs Health Authority's *AICHA Newsletter* (1974 . . .). Tribes and corporations have also issued nonperiodical titles concerning health, such as the Copper River Native Association's *It Robs You of Everything: Ahtna People Talk About Drinking*.

The native press has generated valuable resource materials that can be used in curriculum development.

The foregoing are simply representative examples. Similar lists of titles from the native press could be made for the specialized areas of natural resources, business and economic development, education, and others. Education has received perhaps the broadest coverage with publications devoted to its various levels—elementary, secondary, and post-secondary—and to special concerns such as adult, bilingual, vocational, and special education. At the national, regional, and local levels, the native press has generated impressive amounts of information that can serve as resource materials in future curriculum development, especially that aimed at meeting the short-range concerns of Indian communities.

The native press in general—the news sources of tribes, nations, native

The native press in general—the news sources of tribes, nations, native corporations, and urban communities—should also be put to more use than it has been in Indian studies, especially in meeting the long-range goals of existing programs such as cultural preservation. Indian journalist Richard LaCourse has written, "A good tribal newspaper is also the first rough draft of the significant tribal history of the ongoing present."[8] Some such publications represent impressive records of contemporary tribal life: *The Ute Bulletin* (1950 . . .), *Tribal Tribune* (1956 . . .), *Navajo Times Today* (1959 . . .), *Jicarilla Chieftain* (1962 . . .), and *Fort Apache Scout* (1962 . . .). Presses such as those of the Utes and Quinaults have also turned out volumes of tribal history. Since their formation under provisions of the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act, the Alaska Native Corporations have published periodical and nonperiodical titles that, in total, make up a detailed record of their affairs. Regional and national concerns have been addressed by publications such as *Tundra Times* (1962 . . .), *Native Nevada* (1962 . . .), *Akwesasne Notes* (1969 . . .), and *Wassaja* (1973–1983). Concerns of urban Indians are reflected in the pages of hundreds of newspapers such as *Talking Leaf* (1935 . . .). As records of the day-to-day concerns of Indian communities, such publications are a monumental resource for the study of tribal history, traditional values, politics, social structures, and economics; urbanization; native political movements, both national and international; and numerous other aspects of the contemporary native scene.

As product and process, the native press has a long history. With the establishment of the first native-run press in 1828 began a press history that continues today. That history is represented by more than two thousand periodical titles alone, two thirds of which have been established during the past twenty years. Impressive collections of these materials in hard copy or in microform are housed at a number of institutions, including the Wisconsin State Historical Society, UCLA's American Indian Studies Center, Princeton University, Navajo Community College, and the American Native Press Archives at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock. Union lists have been compiled, and exhaustive reference guides have been written. It is time to recognize the native press for what it represents in American Indian studies: resource materials generated for the most part by native peoples themselves. Since the native press in general represents the voice of the Indian community, the continued credibility of those involved in American Indian studies will be measured to some degree, at least in the Indian community, by the extent to which they take that voice into account.

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Notes

1. See, e.g., Russell Thornton, "American Indian Studies as an Academic Discipline: A Revisit," in *American Indian Issues in Higher Education* (Los Angeles: American

Indian Studies Center, University of California, 1981), 3-9; Roxanne Dunbar Ortiz, "Developing Indian Academic Professionals," *Integrated Education*, 19 (January-April, 1981), 3841.

2. Dean Chavers, "False Promises: Barriers in American Indian Education," *Integrated Education*, 19 (January-April, 1981), 16.
3. Ortiz, "Developing Indian Academic Professionals," 38, 39.
4. Susan Guyette and Charlotte Heth, *Issues for the Future of American Indian Studies: A Needs Assessment and Program Guide* (Los Angeles: American Indian Studies Center, University of California, 1985), 78.
5. Ibid.
6. See, e.g., Jarold Ramsey, "American Indian Literatures and American Literatures: An Overview;" A. LaVonne Brown Ruoff, "Teaching American Indian Authors, 1772-1968;" Larry Evers, "Continuity and Change in American Indian Oral Literature;" and Ruoff, "A Selected Bibliography of American Indian Literatures," *ADE Bulletin*, No. 75 (Summer, 1983), 35-48. See also, Andrew Wiget, "Sending a Voice: The Emergence of Contemporary Native American Poetry," *College English*, 46 (October, 1984), 598-609; Houston R. Baker, Jr., ed. *Three American Literatures* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1982); and Paula Gunn Allen, ed. *Studies in American Indian Literature* (New York: Modern Language Association, 1983).
7. Guyette and Heth, *Issues for the Future of American Indian Studies*, 75.
8. *Confederated Umatilla Journal*, 1 (December, 1975), 8.